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AUTHOR Wallace, Richard C., Jr.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

A significant body of research from business and industry has generally confirmed the contribution of participative decision-making to improved organizational effectiveness and employee morale. Following a literature review, this paper explores the implementation of shared decision-making in the Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania) Public Schools. The conceptual framework, assumptions, and operational characteristics of the instructional cabinet are presented. The principal and the instructional teacher leader's roles are reviewed, along with the training methods employed. Since 1981, Pittsburgh has invested heavily in staff development to achieve school improvement and cost effective management. Pittsburgh desired to create a climate where faculty participation resulted in shared responsibility for improved decision-making, increased professional satisfaction, and greater commitment to the total school community. The instructional cabinet was designed to: (1) improve collegiality among professionals; (2) create a dynamic community of learners; and (3) promote continued school renewal. The administrator assists staff development personnel in providing necessary training for teachers to acquire, practice, and evaluate the skills of cabinet members as the group engages in shared decision-making. Two proposed studies involving instructional cabinet group interactions and the instructional teacher leader are described. If shared decision-making is to lead to greater professionalism, researchers must carefully document the process and studies must relate processes to outcomes. (17 references) (MLH)

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THE INSTRUCTIONAL CABINET AND SHARED DECISION MAKING IN THE PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS: THEORY, PRACTICE AND EVALUATION

Richard C. Wallace, Jr.
Betty Radvak-Shovlin
Marina Piscolish
Paul G. LeMahieu

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> All schools deal with problems in one way or another, but our observations convince us that most schools use up a great deal of energy unproductively. Schools often flounder through problems instead of using systematic procedures that save time. Schools sometimes put the wrong people to work: they give a problem to a group when almost everyone is willing to accept a solution chosen by the principal or the school's secretary, or conversely, the principal imposes a solution that actually requires the initiative and commitment of groups. Schools sometimes undertake to solve problems within the school that cannot be solved there. They sometimes expect to solve a problem once and for all, when in fact work on the problem must be recycled year after year. Schools sometimes use methods that alleviate one problem only to make others worse. Finally, schools often engage in "fire fighting" - they try to cope with a great many very difficult problems at the same time by trying to stop-gap one after another. All those ways of coping are understandable, but the waste of effort is prodigious. A problem solving capacity requires ways of working that avoid those wastes and that enable participants to devote most of their energy to the rewarding parts of their jobs (Schmuck and Runkel, 1985, pp. 199-200).

INTRODUCTION

To reach maximum potential, all institutions must be able to solve problems effectively. The most creative ideas must be brought to bear on the identification and definition of problems, the generation of alternative solutions, and the selection, implementation and evaluation of specific solutions to identified problems.

Schools are no exception. They must be able to identify and solve problems if they are to excel in providing for the educational achievement of students and in promoting the personal growth of professionals. To ensure the continuous growth and development of faculty, schools must engage those persons in the shared decision making and problem solving process.

During the past several years, a great deal has been written about the issues of teacher empowerment and site based decision making. The underlying

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assumption regarding these issues is that schools, as social organizations, will function more effectively when teachers are more actively involved in decisions that affect their work life.

A significant body of research from business and industry has generally confirmed the notion that participative decision making contributes to organizational effectiveness and high morale among members of a work force (Wood, 1984). Research results regarding site based decision making in education are sparse (Malen, Ogawa and Krantz, 1989b). The research on organizational development in education (Schmuck and Runkel, 1985) does provide encouraging results. However, the assumptions with respect to these issues in school settings need to be more fully validated.

This paper will deal with the context in which a limited and carefully circumscribed process of shared decision making has been implemented in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Public Schools. The conceptual framework, the assumptions, and the operational characteristic of the Instructional Cabinet will be presented. The role of the principal and the Instructional Teacher Leader as members of the Instructional Cabinet will be reviewed. Training provided to principals and Instructional Teacher Leaders will be described. Finally, the results of preliminary evaluation studies of the Instructional Cabinet and the Instructional Teacher Leader's role will be presented.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

School Based Management

School based management (or, school site management) has been used in school districts to provide more opportunity for local officials to engage in problem solving at the building level. In the 1960's and 1970's, urban school decentralization often accompanied the power to make certain budget decisions in sub-district offices rather than in central headquarters (David, 1989).

In the 1980's, teacher empowerment has been added to site management, providing teachers with the opportunity to engage in shared decision making with administrators; promoting collegiality among teachers; and stimulating the continuing development of educational professionals. When professionals experience more control over decisions affecting their own professional lives and work environment, they presumably become more productive as teachers, stimulate changes in educational programming, and increase achievement of students.

Shared decision making is often viewed as a broader concept that goes beyond management to educational issues. As David (1989) notes, the issues that drive shared decision making include: creative use of technology, collaborative learning, upgraded classes, and schools within schools.

Outcome Studies

Given the salience of school based management and shared decision making in schools, one would expect to find studies that provide guidelines for implementation. Unfortunately, studies are rare. Malen and her colleagues at the University of Utah (Malen, Ogawa and Krantz, 1989) completed a comprehensive review of the literature and concluded that school based management descriptions are plentiful but that evidence of their operational effectiveness is scant. Malen and her colleagues (1989a) cast serious doubt that school based management can achieve its stated objectives; yet they pointed out that the "innovation" may not have been given a fair chance. They also emphasized the need for more research in this area.

On the other hand, David (1989) interpreted the research to indicate that teachers report an increased feeling of job satisfaction and enhanced perception of the profession; however, she stated that positive outcomes occur only when teachers perceive that the extra time and energy required by shared

decision making and planning are accompanied by real authority. That is, genuine sharing of decision making creates good will, while frustration is the direct outcome of minimal participation.

Wood (1984) reviewed the broad field of organizational theory, social psychology and research in business organizations, hospitals and schools. She concluded that participatory decision making yields high-quality decisions, enhanced employee morale, reduced resistance to change, greater productivity and commitment, and reduction in absenteeism.

When teachers were subjects of study, however, the results tended to produce more frustration than fulfillment. Wood (1984) cited climate, nature of the task, and abilities of participants as critical factors in satisfactory decision making in schools. Variables that negatively affect participatory decision making are the lack of congruence among the espoused values and beliefs of subordinates and their behavior. Inconsistency between espoused values and observed behaviors of leaders (i.e., principals) was cited by Wood as a serious flaw in many organizations. Training of participants in group dynamics and self expression may tend to produce greater "equalization of power" and more effective participatory decision making, according to Wood.

Malen and Ogawa (1988) provided a rather sobering analysis of a "confounding" case study of site based governance in the Salt Lake City School District. The shared governance program in the Salt Lake City schools requires that each school form two councils: a School Improvement Council involving teachers, administrators and non-certified staff and a School Community Council that adds parents to the School Improvement Council. Theoretically, the councils are given broad jurisdiction and formal policy making authority. The councils were authorized to deal with budgets (within guidelines established by the central administration) and had discretionary

funds at their disposal. Councils were also directly involved in personnel decisions, program evaluation, and other matters deemed to be of importance. Despite the opportunity and a supportive central office environment, teachers and parents did not wield significant influence on the operation of the schools. Malen and Ogawa concluded that: (1) more training of all parties might have altered the patterns of influence; and (2) more flexibility and willingness of principals to share decision making with the councils might have produced more compelling results. This study, albeit limited, raises the impact of training on the effectiveness of site based governance and shared decision making.

Role of the Principal

Both David (1989) and Malen and her colleagues (1988, 1989a) underscored the central role of the principal in shared decision making. Principals, as well as central office personnel, must establish the norms that support autonomy and genuine openness to sharing decisions. Without support at both the building and the district level, effective shared decision making is unlikely to occur. Many principals undoubtedly will need extensive training in order to engage staff in productive experiences in sharing authority for decision making. Likewise, teachers and others require training if they are to be involved effectively in shared decision making.

Change in Schools

The literature on change in schools (Hall and Hord, 1987; Fullan, 1982) reminds us that innovations take three to five years to become fully implemented. Participants need extensive training and feedback to implement an innovation and achieve expected results. If training is viewed as staff development, the research of Joyce and Showers (1987) could be applied to the implementation of shared decision making processes in school: learners

practice expected behaviors, receive feedback on their performance, and receive coaching to insure effective application, if they are to demonstrate the behaviors expected in shared decision making.

Viewed as an innovation that requires significant changes in participant behavior, shared decision making is a growth process for individuals and institutions and requires attention to developmental stages of concern and levels of use (Hall, et al., 1987).

This selective review of the literature provides the context for the presentation of shared decision making in the Pittsburgh Schools. The sections that follow provide a review of procedures used and the role description of the key players in the District's attempt to achieve effective problem solving at the school building level.

SHARED DECISION MAKING AND INSTRUCTIONAL CABINETS IN THE PITTSBURGH SCHOOLS

Background

In January 1981, the Pittsburgh Board of Education established specific priorities for improving the quality of education in the District (Cooley and Bickel, 1985). The Board established two general priority areas: school improvement and cost effective management. Under school improvement, the two top priorities were improving student achievement and improving the quality of personnel evaluation. Since 1981, Pittsburgh has invested heavily in staff development to achieve these two priority goals. Extensive training has been provided to principals to enable them to function as educational leaders. Teachers receive systematic training through the teacher center programs at the elementary, middle and secondary school levels. The best known of these programs, the Schenley High School Teacher Center (Wallace, et al., 1984), paved the way for the implementation of Instructional Cabinets in the schools and the role of the Instructional Teacher Leaders as members of the Cabinet.

An important milestone in the evolution of the Instructional Cabinets in Pittsburgh occurred in 1985, when the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers and the Board of Education reached an "early bird" contract settlement one year before the expiration of the contract. That settlement created the Teacher Professionalism Project, an ongoing vehicle for management and labor to engage in continuous productive dialogue focused on educational issues.

The Instructional Cabinet is viewed by both teachers and administration as an important vehicle for school renewal and professional development. Between 1985 and 1989, the concept of the Instructional Teacher Leader was carefully delineated; training prepared teachers for a more expansive role in their own professional development and that of their peers.

A second "early bird" settlement in 1989 witnessed the establishment of the Professionalism and Education Partnership. The Partnership expanded to include greater representation of the Pittsburgh Administrators Association. The Partnership has become a permanent forum for the discussion of educational issues and the formulation of initiatives to promote the continuing professional development of teachers and administrators.

Instructional Cabinets

The concept of the Instructional Cabinet is not new in education. During the 1960's, Instructional Cabinets were part of the Team Teaching program promoted through the Harvard-Lexington Programs (Shaplin and Olds, 1964). In a school organized for team teaching, team leaders and senior teachers worked with the principal as members of the Instructional Cabinet to set the educational agenda for a school. Monitoring program implementation, insuring articulation of curriculum, allocating space for instruction, and planning instructional improvement programs are typical issues addressed by the Instructional Cabinet. The Instructional Cabinet seeks to: (1) promote

collegiality among professionals; (2) create a "dynamic community of learners" among the professionals in a school; and (3) promote continued school renewal.

The context for Instructional Cabinets in the Pittsburgh Schools differs somewhat from the Harvard-Lexington Model. Team teaching exists only at the middle school level in Pittsburgh; however, all secondary and elementary schools have Instructional Cabinets.

An Overview of the Pittsburgh Model

The goal of shared decision making is to create a climate in the Pittsburgh Public Schools where faculty participation results in a shared responsibility for improved decision making, increased satisfaction in one's professional position, and greater commitment to the total school community. The Pittsburgh administrator, as the educational leader of the school, provides the opportunity and the guidance for shared decision making in the Instructional Cabinet. She/he assists staff development personnel to provide the necessary training for teachers to acquire, practice and evaluate the skills of the members of the Cabinet as it engages in shared decision making. Through the skillful use of shared decision making within the Instructional Cabinet, the principal empowers the faculty to become a model of a "community of learners" for professionals in that school. The Instructional Cabinet, in turn, energizes the entire school faculty to move toward continued professional development and joint problem solving, thereby making the school an effective problem solving institution.

Shared Decision Making: A Definition

Shared decision making is a process in which professional members of the school collaborate, where appropriate, in identifying problems, defining goals, formulating policy, shaping direction, and monitoring program implementation. The process requires careful analysis of available

information, the development of plans to address identified needs, and the creation and implementation of monitoring systems to evaluate procedures and results (Miller, 1987).

The purposes of shared decision making are to engage faculty and administration in the Instructional Cabinet in analysis and group problem solving regarding the instructional program of the school, the academic achievement of pupils, and other academic issues of concern to the school. The desired outcome is the creation of a setting where administrators and faculty share their wisdom and experiences to create a positive working environment for themselves as professionals. By working effectively as a team, the assumption is that teachers and administrators will produce an effective learning environment for students and enhance their academic achievement. In such an environment, all parties - teachers, administrators, pupils - enjoy a positive feeling of accomplishment and personal satisfaction. Through this synergistic effort, a higher degree of productivity is achieved than would otherwise be possible (Schmuck and Runkel, 1985).

The opportunity for teachers to share with their administrators in reviewing, developing, implementing and evaluating policies and plans within schools has benefits strongly supported by research. Shared decision making:

1. Is consistent with the principles of democracy and, therefore, is an appropriate model of governance for a public institution;
2. Results in greater consensus about commitment to goals;
3. Produces better decisions;
4. Produces a greater commitment to implement decisions by all those involved;
5. Promotes staff enthusiasm and higher morale;

6. Stimulates greater staff productivity and cooperation;

7. Improves information flow and communication; and

8. Improves effective implementation of ideas and programs (Schmuck and Runkel, 1985).

The Degree of Participation by Faculty

The degree of participation in decision making by teachers, determined by the principal, will vary with specific issues. Time availability, degree of expertise, and appropriateness of faculty involvement, along with other factors, will influence whether decisions can be shared.

Figure 1 sets forth the range of involvement in the decision making process. While some researchers suggest that consensus level is the most desirable form of participatory or shared decision making (Schmuck and Runkel, 1985), the consultative levels (i.e., the administrator seeks and uses input from teachers) have proven to be an improvement of traditional decision making. The level of participation in decision making is identified by the administrator and communicated to the Instructional Cabinet group before an issue is discussed. Involvement may change from consensus seeking to varying levels of consultation, depending on the specific issue or circumstances. However, a principal should not mislead teachers to believe that they can participate fully (e.g., Level 7) in the decision making process and then arbitrarily or capriciously withdraw that involvement. A principal must be both honest and consistent in dealing with the faculty's level of involvement in the decision making process.

Figure 1

LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT IN
DECISION MAKING

Autocratic ------ Consultative ------ Participatory

No Involvement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total Consensus

1. No involvement

   Teachers show no interest in participating in decisions made in schools or are not given an opportunity to participate in decision making by the principal since the issue may not warrant group attention or time may not be available.

2. Teachers provide information to the administrator.

   This level of consultation is one where teachers assist the administrator in making a more informed decision than he/she might make alone. This is done by providing relevant information for consideration by the principal.

3. Teachers help to formulate alternatives.

   At this level, the administrator seeks the thinking of others, examining the problem and generating solutions from many new points of view. In this process of brainstorming, all ideas are acceptable: this process allows for intuitive, creative, and rational discourse about possible solutions.

4. Teachers suggest specific alternatives.

   At this level, teachers participate in generating many solutions, and as a group offer their opinions for the best ways to proceed. The administrator considers their suggestions and chooses a course of action from the suggested alternatives provided by the teachers.

5. Teachers review and comment on proposed decision.

   The principal gives teachers the responsibility to review and comment on his/her proposed decision.

6. Teachers and administrator jointly make the decision.

   At this level, the principal and teachers share in the analysis of problems. They generate and evaluate alternatives and arrive at decisions together. However, the principal maintains a superordinate position in the group.

7. The group makes the decision.

   In this most mature level of participation, all members of the Cabinet share equally in decision making. The administrator is an equal member of the group, not a superordinate. The group strives to reach consensus. Consensus is achieved when enough members of the Cabinet favor a solution to a problem and those who may disagree do not obstruct the implementation of the solution.

(Adapted from Wood 1984, Miller 1987)

What Kinds of Decisions are Shared?

The principals as members of the Instructional Cabinets in Pittsburgh Public Schools share in the decision making process to a greater or lesser degree in topics such as the following:

1. Students

   Analysis of data from standardized tests to determine groupings of students and modifications of instructional programs.

   Analysis of data concerning student absence and grades to plan appropriate interventions.

   Development of discipline standards to promote more favorable learning conditions.

2. Curriculum

   Articulation of curriculum and instruction between grade levels.

   Review of supplemental instructional material.

   Allocation of discretionary funds.

3. Instruction

   Design of school based staff development programs.

   Use of diversified strategies to accommodate student and curricular needs.

   Allocation of space to ensure effective instructional conditions.

   Design of school organization to promote optimum conditions for teaching and learning.

4. Community

   Promote relationships of the schools with community groups.

   Enhance the involvement of individual parents in school programs and in the education of their children.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Shared Decision Making

The advantages of shared decision making are many. Participants tend to acquire or refine skills in oral communication, conflict resolution, consensus building, and problem solving. Other advantages include the following: The teacher is no longer involved only in his or her own classroom and takes greater responsibility for the welfare of the entire school and a stronger role in the definition of the working conditions under which he/she practices; teachers see each other differently; adults have the opportunity to interact with other professionals on a more systematic basis and gain greater appreciation of one another's talents; individual abilities and talents emerge and develop as groups solve problems together.

Shared decision making adds to the quality of life among professionals. It promotes personal growth and development and helps build commitment among faculty to the school, the pupils, and each other. It provides a sense of well being that comes from genuine participation in decisions that affect the lives of the participants and the process of schooling.

There are disadvantages to shared decision making. It takes longer to reach a group decision than it would take a principal to make a decision. Other disadvantages include the following: shared decision making can cause conflicts to surface; when conflict is avoided, issues can be smoothed over or ignored, rather than addressed and resolved (Schmuck and Runkel, 1985); shared decision making can create unfulfilled expectations and increase frustrations of teachers; shared decision making usually does not result in shared responsibility, as the administrator must assume ultimate responsibility.

The Role of the Principal

As the review of the literature pointed out (e.g., David 1989, Malen, 1989), the role of the principal is critical in successful shared decision making. For Instructional Cabinets to be successful, the principal must:

1. Define clearly how authority is to be shared within the Cabinet;
2. Select and communicate in advance the level of group participation on specific topics based on the nature of the problem;
3. Provide training for the entire Cabinet in shared decision making skills;
4. Provide time for group analysis and feedback at the conclusion of the meetings so that the group can reflect on its decision making process and continue to develop its skill in shared decision making.
5. Choose the most appropriate and effective role for himself/herself in the Cabinet meeting, including the sharing of responsibility for chairing the Cabinet meetings;
6. Adopt a flexible routine that permits inclusion of agenda items from a variety of sources (Malen and Ogawa, 1989).

THE ROLE OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL TEACHER LEADER AND THE PRINCIPAL IN THE CABINET

The Instructional Teacher Leader role grew out of the role of the Clinical Resident Teacher (Bickel, et al, 1987) implemented in the three Pittsburgh teacher centers. The Instructional Teacher Leader serves as a liaison between teachers in his/her area of responsibility and administrator, a collegial monitor of instruction, and a program coordinator. Instructional Teacher Leaders are nominated by the teachers whom they serve and appointed by their school administrators. The Instructional Teacher Leader role replaced the

department head role in the high schools and the team leader role in the middle schools. It is a new role for elementary school teachers. Instructional Teacher Leaders are trained by the Staff Development Team and Clinical Resident Teachers from the Schenley and Brookline Teacher Centers. This paper focuses solely on the Instructional Teacher Leader's role as a member of the Instructional Cabinet.

As a member of the Instructional Cabinet, the Instructional Teacher Leader participates in the process of shared decision making with his/her peers and administrators, dealing with topics previously described. The Instructional Teacher Leader is responsible for maintaining communication between members of his/her department, team, or grade level; the Instructional Teacher Leader brings topics and issues relating to instruction from his/her peers to the Instructional Cabinet for appropriate discussion and decisions.

Training

Prior to the inception of Instructional Cabinets, leadership training was provided to principals in Pittsburgh. Since 1981, principals have attended annual summer "academies" followed by several days of follow-up training during each school year. Training topics have included: observing and analyzing effective instruction; conferring about teaching; supervising content areas; developing individual school based staff development programs; using data for educational decision making; and evaluating styles of leadership.

In 1984, the foundation was built for the initiation of the Instructional Cabinet: principals learned communication skills for effective decision making. Since then, summer "mini courses" have addressed conflict resolution, goal setting for professionals, building high performance teams, collegiality

as a component of school improvement, shared decision making, adult developmental stages, and data driven instructional leadership.

Situational leadership training has helped principals to lead and share leadership with teachers in the Instructional Cabinet. Situational leadership was examined in relation to the following topics: analyzing roles in groups; effective listening; group processes; and the relationship between shared decision making and situational leadership. One of the most important training strands was "How to Promote Consensus Building." The Staff Development Team developed the training programs for Instructional Cabinets and shared decision making; provided training for principals and other "trainers" of Cabinets; coached trainers; and coached Instructional Cabinets. Additional coaching of secondary school Cabinets was provided by the Director of the Schenley High School Teacher Center.

During the summer of 1989, all Cabinet members were trained, with their respective principals, to enhance their effectiveness as a shared decision making body. Instructional Cabinets also spent time developing action plans for the 1989-90 school year.

Peer Evaluation of Principal's Leadership in the Instructional Cabinet

Another development regarding Instructional Cabinets occurred during the 1988-89 school year when the Central Administration of the Pittsburgh Public Schools and the Pittsburgh Administrators Association collaborated to implement a peer evaluation system. This peer evaluation system was designed to be part of the formative evaluation system for the District's administrators. Teams of three administrators, a principal, a vice principal, and a content area supervisor were given the responsibility for a cluster of schools and were trained to observe and provide feedback to approximately ten of their peers. The primary focus for the peer evaluation system during the

1988-89 school year was observing and conferring with teachers to improve the quality of instruction. The secondary focus was on observing and providing feedback with respect to the effectiveness of Instructional Cabinets. Data gathered on the Instructional Cabinet were not included as part of the formative evaluation of principals; however, beginning in the 1989-90 school year, the principal's effectiveness in leading the Instructional Cabinet will become an important part of his/her annual evaluation.

Future Needs

Even though substantial training has been provided to both principals and teachers to enable them to engage in productive shared decision making, more needs to be done. Our informal assessment suggests a wide variation in the quality of performance of Instructional Cabinets. Our observations support the views of Malen, et al., (1989): the principal plays the crucial role in shared decision making. Our principals who genuinely engage their teachers in shared decision making meet with successful Cabinets. On the other hand, principals who feel threatened by the "loss of power" (i.e., sharing decisions that were once the sole responsibility of the principal), impede growth toward mature functioning of the Instructional Cabinets.

Studies will examine the effects of decisions on members of the Cabinet, the climate of the school, and other important educational or organizational outcomes. The following section reports on the first of two studies completed in 1989.

STUDIES OF INSTRUCTIONAL CABINETS

The District's office of Research, Evaluation and Test Development has completed a comprehensive design for studying Instructional Cabinets. The design is based on the assumption that no single study can possibly investigate the complex interplay of variables that determine how decisions

are made, how they are implemented, and what effects such decisions have upon individual members of the Cabinet, faculty members in the school and the administrators themselves. Ultimately, one must examine the effects of shared decision making on the central client of the school -- the students. If one assumes that the decisions of the Instructional Cabinet deal with the instructional matters outlined previously in this paper, then ultimately the questions regarding the impact of decisions on the total ecology of the school must be examined.

Piscolish and LeMahieu (1989c) have identified critical areas of inquiry and various "target populations" involved in the shared decision making process within the Instructional Cabinet. The components of Figure 2 identify the topics to be studied in the program of research on shared decision making and Instructional Cabinets.

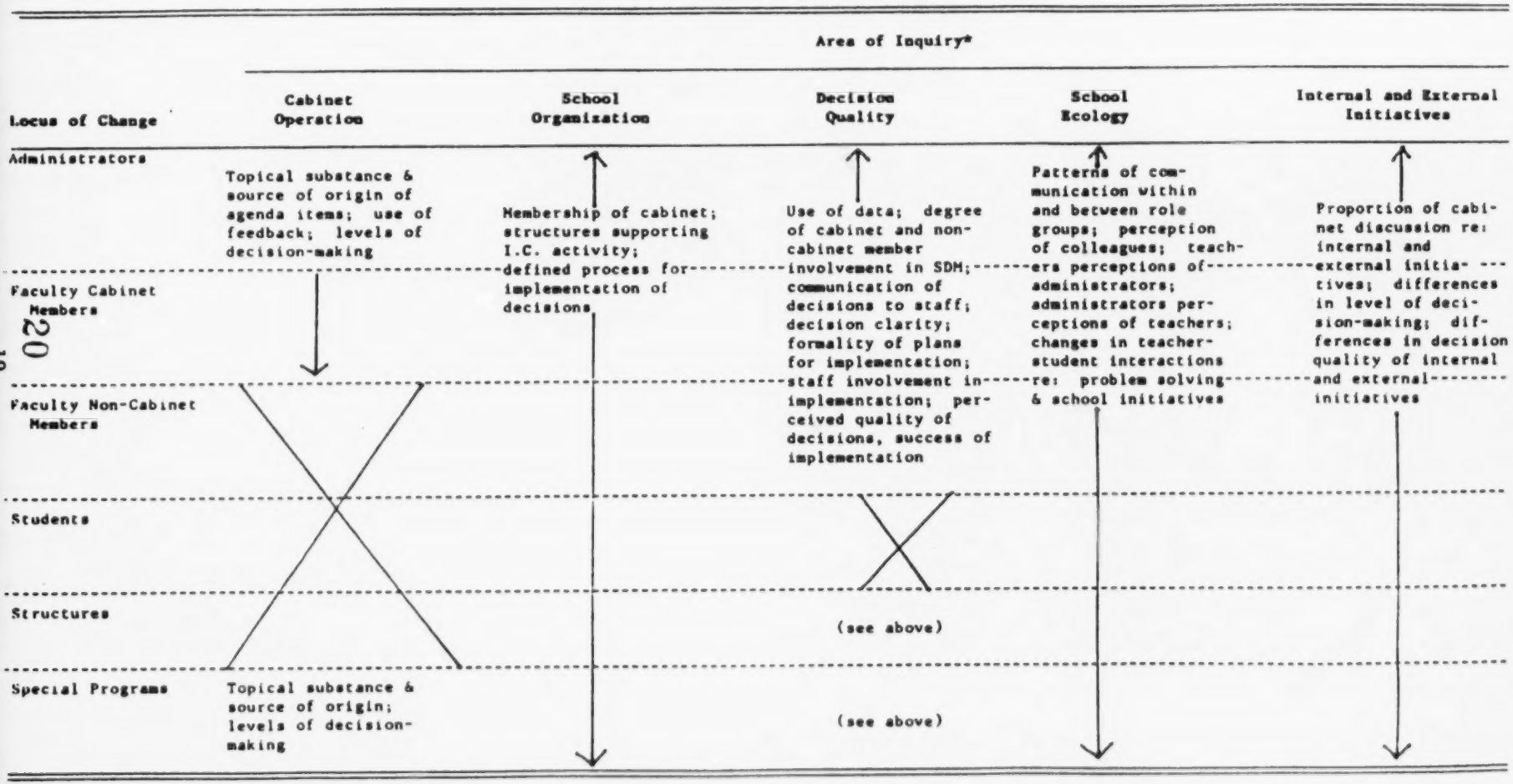
INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE

The first area of inquiry dealing with Cabinet operations will provide data regarding the activity of the Cabinet and its operations over a period of time. Questions to be investigated include the following: What is the topic and the source of the agenda item? What is the level of participation in the group discussion? How is feedback used? What specific level of decision making is used by the Cabinet or the principal?

The second area of inquiry will center on the organization of the school and the relationship of the Cabinet to that organization. Questions addressed in this area of study include the following: What is the makeup of the Cabinet? Are there interest or study groups or committees within the school related to issues under discussion by the Cabinet? Do Cabinet members engage in shared decision making in areas outside of the Cabinet? Do non-Cabinet

FIGURE 2

RESEARCH ON SHARED DECISION-MAKING AND INSTRUCTIONAL CABINETS


Area of Inquiry*
Locus of Change
Cabinet Operation
School Organization
Decision Quality
School Ecology
Internal and External Initiatives
Administrators
Topical substance & source of origin of agenda items; use of feedback; levels of decision-making
Membership of cabinet; structures supporting I.C. activity; defined process for implementation of decisions
Use of data; degree of cabinet and non-cabinet member involvement in SDM; communication of decisions to staff; decision clarity; formality of plans for implementation; staff involvement in implementation; perceived quality of decisions, success of implementation
Patterns of communication within and between role groups; perception of colleagues; teachers perceptions of administrators; administrators perceptions of teachers; changes in teacher-student interactions re: problem solving & school initiatives
Proportion of cabinet discussion re: internal and external initiatives; differences in level of decision-making; differences in decision quality of internal and external initiatives
Faculty Cabinet Members
Faculty Non-Cabinet Members
Students
Structures
(see above)
Special Programs
Topical substance & source of origin; levels of decision-making
(see above)

*See attached description.

members share in the decision making process? If so, how? How are decisions of the Cabinet implemented? What resources are available to assist the Cabinet in reaching its goals?

The third area of inquiry relates to the quality of decisions made by the Cabinet. The following are illustrative of the questions to be investigated in this area: Are data used in decision making? If so, how? Are constituencies within the school involved in the decision making process? If so, how? How are decisions communicated to the staff? Are the decisions understood by the staff? What is the relationship between decisions made by the Cabinet and strategies used to implement the decision? How are plans made to implement decisions communicated to the staff? To what extent is the staff involved in implementation of decisions? What is the perceived quality of the decisions made by the Cabinet? To what extent are the decisions of the Cabinet successfully implemented?

The fourth area of inquiry will center on school climate and the relationship of the Cabinet and shared decision making with the ecology of the school. Questions related to the area of school climate and ecology include the following: What changes occur in the pattern of communication within or among the role groups? What changes occur in colleagues' perception of each other? Are there perceptible differences in teacher interaction with students as a result of shared decision making? What changes occur in teachers' sense of professionalism, pride in the school, district, or profession? What changes, if any, can be attributed to the Instructional Cabinet's role in promoting commitment to teaching or sense of teacher empowerment?

The fifth area of inquiry centers on differences in the function of the Cabinet in relation to externally and internally initiated programs. Questions to be pursued in this area include: What proportion of Cabinet

discussions is related to internal or external initiatives? What differences, if any, exist in the level of decision making engaged in by the Cabinet with respect to external or internal initiatives? What differences exist, if any, in the quality of decisions related to external or internal initiatives?

Many of the studies to be conducted under the comprehensive design are formative in nature. Data gathered from such studies will be used to revise training programs, or develop new ones, to promote enhanced effectiveness of the Instructional Cabinets.

The following are excerpts from two recently completed studies.

Study One -- Instructional Cabinet Activity and Group Interaction

The first study was a descriptive analysis of a case study of Instructional Cabinet activity and group interaction at the secondary level (Piscolish and LeMahieu, 1989a). Data were gathered on the following variables: the nature and source of agenda items; patterns of participation in the Instructional Cabinet; and the nature and use of feedback within the Cabinet. The data sources included: copies of each secondary school Cabinet's agenda and agenda proposal forms for the 1988-89 school year; copies of participation analysis charts, graphs or diagrams within the Cabinet from each secondary school for each meeting; and copies of all feedback instruments used by secondary school Instructional Cabinets. Data collection was restricted to secondary schools due to the fact that secondary principals have received more training than their elementary and middle school counterparts; also, each secondary school has a facilitator of its "Center of Excellence" program who has been provided specific training in analyzing Cabinet meeting participation, giving feedback to members of the Instructional Cabinet.

Piscolish and LeMahieu's (1989a) data demonstrate that during the course of the year, the number of items placed on the agenda decreased from an

average of 5.3 items in the fall of 1988 to 3.7 items in the spring of 1989. Moreover, the length of the Cabinet meetings remained relatively stable. Training provided to Cabinet members supported the notion that more effective meetings tend to result in shorter agendas, thus permitting more thoughtful attention to each item. Clearly, shared decision making takes more time.

Study One identified that 14% of the items on secondary Cabinet agendas involved training given to Cabinet members by principals or other trainers to insure more effective meetings, to analyze group process, and to receive feedback on their interactions. After standardizing proportions for the remaining categories of agenda topics, four specific topics account for 70% of the agendas for secondary school Instructional Cabinets for the 1988-89 school year: (1) curriculum and instruction issues; (2) the school's organization and schedule for instruction; (3) issues of professional development; and (4) special programs and events. The remaining topics included school climate, use of space and facilities, budgetary issues, public relations issues, and personnel issues.

Principals were trained to share responsibility for chairing the Instructional Cabinet meetings with other members of the Cabinet. In the fall of 1988, building administrators chaired 23% of their Cabinet meetings. By the spring of 1989, Cabinet members chaired 94% of the meetings. As the year evolved, the principals apparently gained more confidence in shared leadership.

Table 1 displays data on participation in decisions.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Principals designated the level of teacher involvement prior to the discussion of a particular agenda item. A review of the data reflects that 43% of the items were defined as informational, meaning that no input was being asked of the Cabinet members. Approximately 32% of the items were discussion items (i.e., the input of the Instructional Teacher Leaders was sought, but it was made clear that the final decision would be made by the principal or other administrators). Only 23% of the items involved the Instructional Cabinets reaching a decision by consensus. The proportion of the items designated by levels of decision making remained fairly constant over the year; however, there was a slight increase by the end of the 1988-89 school year. Twenty-seven percent of all agenda items did result in Cabinet decisions.

This initial study confirmed the need for more training if principals are to engage Cabinet members in more shared decisions. Moreover, too much Cabinet meeting time was consumed by informational items. Agendas need to be more carefully screened to eliminate those items better handled through conventional memos or announcements. This would allow more time for discussion of educational issues - the real thrust of shared decision making.

Study Two -- The Instructional Teacher Leader

A second study (Piscolish and LeMahieu, 1989b) focused on the perception of various stakeholders regarding the role of the Instructional Teacher Leader. Data regarding perceptions were gathered from 54 Instructional Teacher Leaders, 10 principals, 13 supervisors, and 53 teachers with whom the Instructional Teacher Leaders worked. Among the data were responses of the target groups to survey items and responses to open-ended items. Specific items on the role of the Instructional Teacher Leader as a member of the Instructional Cabinet and also as leader of a department are shown in Table 2.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

The data in Table 2 leads to some interesting observations. All groups agreed that participation of the Instructional Teacher Leaders in the Instructional Cabinet did occur; the responses yielded the highest mean scores and rankings. All parties gave a high mean rating and ranking to the use of shared decision making by the Instructional Teacher Leaders with their department colleagues. On the other hand, all respondents ranked teachers' perceptions of the Instructional Teacher Leaders offering improved representation of their colleagues as the lowest or next to lowest ranked item.

In open-ended responses in the survey regarding the needs of each of the respondent groups, the Instructional Teacher Leaders communicated the need for additional training on issues related to shared decision making, conflict management techniques, trust building, and consensus building. When Instructional Teacher Leaders were asked to identify issues related to their role responsibilities which seemed to be a source of misunderstanding with building administrators, 55% of the Instructional Teacher Leaders did not respond. However, of the remaining 45%, the issue most often cited as a source of misunderstanding was a lack of genuine shared decision making with the principal. Moreover, Instructional Teacher Leaders cited this problem as jeopardizing the effective functioning of the Instructional Cabinet and diminishing the Instructional Teacher Leaders' effectiveness as liaisons and coordinators.

Additional comments described some principals as one-way communicators with limited receptivity to the Instructional Teacher Leader functioning as an

advocate of teacher concerns. One Instructional Teacher Leader captured the essence of this problem:

> "Teachers are often led to believe they have input when they don't. This situation is worse than being told what to do with no input.
>
> "My perception is that the communication is too much one way! I should have more opportunity to voice the concerns and ideas of the department to the administrator and not always the other way around."

When asked to describe their greatest contribution to the school, 43% of the Instructional Teacher Leaders cited improved communication both within their departments and among school personnel.

The studies provided formative evaluation data to the administration and the Staff Development Team regarding the perceived functioning of the Instructional Cabinet. Analyses of the data gave trainers a focus for their efforts. Additionally, the data will be useful to peer administrators as they observe principals and provide feedback regarding the functioning of the Instructional Cabinets and the process of improving shared decision making in the District.

THE KEY DECISIONS STUDY

In addition to the two preliminary studies reported above, the research questions and the methodology for an investigation of "key decisions" and the outcomes of shared decision making in Pittsburgh's secondary schools is included in this paper to provide the reader with an understanding of how the questions presented in the preceding five areas of disciplined inquiry will be pursued. What follows is a description of the questions, the methodology, the analyses to be performed and plans for dissemination related to this important topic of a study currently in process.

Piscolish and LeMahieu (1989c) assert that shared decision making processes and outcomes can best be evaluated through disciplined inquiry into specific important decisions rather than through an investigation of some

abstract notion of the decision making model itself. The study to be described will follow the trails of key decisions through the process of making and acting upon them. It will explain the relationships among the topical substance of a decision, the degree to which the decision was shared, and the amount and type of support the decision and its implementation receive from the staff. A presentation of the research questions and the methodology follow.

Research Questions

1. What differences exist, if any, between decisions that are shared versus decisions that are not, with respect to each of the following outcomes:
   A. Knowledge of the outcome and rationale for a decision;
   B. satisfaction with the outcomes of decisions;
   C. belief that the individuals' needs and/or opinions were accommodated by the decision process;
   D. willingness to facilitate the implementation of a decision; and
   E. perception of the success of a decision's implementation.
2. What differences exist by role group and by Instructional Cabinet involvement, if any, in the staff's perceived level of involvement in important decisions?
3. What differences exist across and within role groups and by Instructional Cabinet involvement, if any, in the perceived level of decision making processes (e.g., "Autocratic," "Consultative," "Consensual") applied to "Administrative/Logistical" issues versus "Instructional/Professional" issues?

4. What differences exist by role group and by Instructional Cabinet involvement, if any, in the topical substance (e.g., "Administrative/Logistical" versus "Instructional/Professional") of decisions nominated as important school-level decisions?

Methodology

A sampling procedure will be used to identify four of the District's twelve secondary schools to be included in the study. Each of the secondary schools will be rank ordered by the co-directors of the Pittsburgh Centers of Excellence Program. Ranking will be based on perceptions of the effectiveness of the school's Instructional Cabinets. The ranking will be divided into quartiles with one school from each quartile being selected for inclusion in the study. The selection of a school from within a given quartile will be related to two additional factors: 1) the ability to corroborate the expert's ranking with empirical data collected during the 1988-89 school year related to the Instructional Cabinet's activities; and 2) consideration for competing research and program priorities within a given school.

Sample decisions to be probed by the study will be nominated by key informants at each participating school. The informants will include the principal, the Phase II Facilitator, an Instructional Teacher Leader and a non-Cabinet member. The Instructional Teacher Leader and the non-Cabinet member will be selected randomly. Each informant will be asked to nominate three building level decisions made the previous year that have been perceived to have had a significant impact on the school. The compiled nominations will be developed into an instrument to be returned to the informants for the purpose of ranking the decisions from "most important" to "least important"; each decision will also be classified in terms of the perceived level of staff involvement and degree of involvement of the Cabinet.

These ranked and categorized nominations will then be organized according to a scheme using a 2x2x3 matrix which identifies each decision as either "Administrative/Logistical" or "Professional/Instructional"; its categorization as an "Autocratic" decision, a "Consultative" decision or a "Consensual" decision; and whether or not the Instructional Cabinet was involved. Based on the results of these ranking/classifying activities, three decisions will be chosen for each school. Those three decisions will serve as the subject matter for the staff survey. Then, a 25% random sample of staff members including administrators and Phase II Facilitators will be drawn, stratified for race and gender. Participation in the survey will be voluntary.

The survey instrument used will include both open and closed response formats for use by all role groups. While the general survey will contain the same items, a customized cover sheet for the survey will identify the three specific decisions relevant to each individual school in the survey.

Demographic data will be collected for each of the respondents; those data will include race, sex, years of experience in education, in current assignment and in role. Respondents will address questions related to each of the three decisions presented in relation to the five variables included in research question #1.

A secondary school not selected for inclusion in the study will be used to pilot the procedures and the instruments. All of the steps described above will be used in the pilot study. Modifications to procedures and instruments will be made based on the results of the pilot study.

Analyses

A description of the analyses to be performed for the "key decisions" study follows.

Research questions #1 and #3. A three-way analysis of variance will be performed. The three factors will be involvement of Instructional Cabinet in decisions (yes or no); topical substance of decisions (Administrative/Logistical or Professional/Instructional); and level of involvement in decision (Autocratic, Consultative or Consensual). Thus a 2x2x3 factorial analytic scheme will be employed. The dependent measures for the ANOVA will be the total scores for each of the five subscales. The analysis will focus on main effects attributable to each factor as well as each of the two-way interactions.

Research question #2. An appropriate serial index of correlation will be employed to evaluate the correlation between perceived level of staff involvement for paired role groups.

Research question #4. Cross-tabulations will be performed. A chi-square analysis will evaluate the relationship between the topical substance of nominated decisions and role group. The association between the factors will be measured using contingency coefficients and lambda coefficients.

Reporting Results

The data, once analyzed, are expected to shed light on the characteristically complex and elusive phenomenon of decision making. Specifically, the proposed study will give evidence describing whether or not the establishment of Instructional Cabinets and/or a shared decision making model results in any significant change in the decision making process. It will also provide information regarding the nature of the Instructional Cabinet's role in decision making. The study will also enhance our knowledge of the resultant effects the decision making process has on various factors, including communication between staff and administration, understanding of the rationale for decisions, commitment to decision implementation, satisfaction

with decisions' outcomes, and the success of the implementation of the decision.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The studies, both completed and proposed, of shared decision making will provide the District with a measure of the impact of shared decision making on the participants themselves and on the role of Instructional Cabinets. These studies will provide the District, and the profession, with data related to the efficacy and the impact of shared decision making in assisting schools to become more effective problem solving institutions. If teacher empowerment through the role of the Instructional Teacher Leader and involvement in shared decision making at the school level is to lead to a greater commitment to teaching and enhanced learning by pupils, then others need to join with us in researching the conditions under which such shared decision making is implemented.

If shared decision making or site based decision making is to lead to greater professionalism and to schools that can identify and solve problems more effectively, two things must happen: 1) researchers must carefully document the process; 2) studies must be undertaken that relate processes to outcomes. Unless such inputs, processes and outcomes are defined, documented and evaluated, the concepts of shared decision making, Instructional Cabinets and Instructional Teacher Leaders may well go down in educational history as time consuming and ill-advised fads.

TABLE 1

Descriptive Data on Instructional Cabinet Processes

	YEARLY	TRIMESTER		
	88-89	Sept-Nov	Dec-Feb	Mar-May
Average Number of Agenda Items	5	6	5	4
Topic Proportions				
> Curriculum & Instruction	24	26	26	19
> School Climate	4	4	4	5
> Space & Facility Usage	4	4	2	5
> Budget Issues	4	1	3	7
> Community & PR	3	5	1	2
> Events/Activities	13	12	12	16
> Testing Procedures	3	1	2	6
> Organization & Schedules	15	14	20	9
> Professional Development	10	12	10	6
> Personnel	2	3	1	1
> Other	2	4	2	6
> Feedback	16	14	17	18
	100	100	100	100
Chairperson Proportions				
> Administrator	15	22	7	17
> ITL	53	58	53	49
> Other	32	20	40	34
	100	100	100	100
Topic Source Proportions				
> Principal	27	31	25	25
> Vice Principal/Dean	9	10	8	9
> Phase 2 Facilitator	20	19	19	21
> Other Cabinet Member	37	32	39	39
> Guest	7	8	9	6
	100	100	100	100
Item Treatment				
> Informational	45	47	49	39
> Discussion & Input	33	32	29	39
> Decision	22	21	22	22
	100	100	100	100
Decision Proportions				
> Reached	29	30	25	31
> Not Reached	71	70	75	69
	100	100	100	100

TABLE 2

Instructional Teacher Leader (ITL) Study
Related to Issues in Shared Decision Making

Teachers, Principals, Supervisors, and ITLs were asked to respond to the questions below by determining to what extent the ITL in their department has engaged in each of the following activities during his/her tenure where 1="Not at All" and 4="To A Great Extent".

	Responses of Groups Surveyed (Mean and Ranking within Response)			
	ITL	Teacher	Principal	Supervisor
1. ITLs worked with teachers in the department to establish and implement departmental goals	3.7 (3)	3.7 (2)	3.4 (4)	3.1 (4)
2. ITLs participated in the instructional cabinet of the school	3.8 (1)	3.9 (1)	4.0 (1)	3.8 (1)
3. ITLs communicated teachers' concerns to building and curriculum administrators	3.5 (5)	3.6 (3)	3.3 (6)	3.2 (3)
4. ITLs analyzed data with their departmental colleagues to plan, pace, and improve instruction.	3.3 (6)	3.4 (6)	3.3 (6)	3.2 (3)
5. ITLs provided leadership in professional development by informing teachers of current trends, educational research, professional publications, encouraging participation in conferences, workshops, and professional organizations, etc.	3.3 (6)	3.4 (6)	3.1 (7)	2.6 (8)
6. ITLs engaged the department in a shared decision-making process to identify the needs of the department.	3.7 (3)	3.6 (3)	3.5 (2)	3.1 (4)
7. ITLs serve as a conduit of information to and from their colleagues.	3.8 (1)	3.5 (5)	3.5 (2)	3.3 (2)
8. Teachers perceive ITLs as offering improved representation of their concerns.	3.2 (9)	3.0 (9)	2.9 (8)	2.6 (8)
9. ITLs improve the functioning of the department.	3.3 (6)	3.3 (8)	3.4 (4)	3.0 (6)

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